Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

World History

**A Merchant’s List:**

**Import & Export in Iraq, 9th Century**

The variety of items that traveled through Afroeurasia in Era 1 can be seen in part by reviewing this list, which was written in the mid-9th century by Abu Uthman bin Bahr. This list appeared in his pamphlet *The Investigation of Commerce* and gave an inventory of items that arrived in Iraq during his time. It also lists the regions that exported them.

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| **INVENTORY[[1]](#endnote-1)** | |
| * India | Tigers, panthers, elephants, panther skins, rubies, ebony, coconuts |
| * China | Silk, chinaware (porcelain), paper, ink, peacocks, saddles, cinnamon, drugs, utensils of gold and silver, gold coins, engineers, agronomists, marble workers |
| * Arabia | Horses, pedigreed camels, tanned skins |
| * The borders of Maghrib and Barbary | Panthers, felts, hawks, salam leaves (used for tanning leather) |
| * Yemen | Incense, giraffes, gems, curcuma (used as a dye, condiment, and medicine) |
| * Egypt | Donkeys, suits of fine cloth, papyrus, balsam, topaz |
| * The land of Khazars (Central Asia) | Slaves, coats of mail, helmets, neck guards |
| * The land of Chorasmia (part of old Persian Empire) | Musk, ermine, marten, fox and other furs, sugarcane |
| * Samarkland | Paper |
| * Bactria (Balkh) | Sweet grapes |
| * Merv | Zithers, zither players, carpets, suits |
| * Isfahan | Honey, pears, quinces, apples, salt, saffron, soda, syrups, white lead |
| * Kirman | Indigo, cumin |
| * Fars | Linen suits, rose water, jasmine ointment, syrups |
| * Fasa | Pistachios, rare fruit, glassware |
| * Oman and the sea coast | Pearls |
| * Mosul | Quails, curtains, striped cloth |
| * Armenia and Azerbaijan | Felts, carpets, fine mats, wool, packsaddles |

**Student Activities**

1. Read the list and work in partners. Make a list of categories for these trade goods. On a separate sheet of paper, chart those categories, and then organize the trade items by category.
2. *For Discussion:* Based on this inventory, what can you conclude about who had the most luxurious culture? What kind of luxury items did people seek? What did each market focus on?

1. Source: Ragaei and Dorothea El Mallakh, “Trade and Commerce”, in John Hayes, editor, *The Genius of Arab Civilization, Source of Renaissance.* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983), Chapter 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)